

# MEMORIAL AND JOINT RESOLUTION

## Relative to the Indian Policy.

*To the Honorable, the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States, in Congress assembled:*

Your Memorialists, the Legislative Assembly of the State of Nebraska, respectfully represent to your honorable bodies that the material interest and progress of our State, in common with those of several other States and Territories west of the Mississippi River, are retarded by the long continued and increasing Indian hostilities on our western border. We represent to you the unvarnished and unpalatable truth that at no point from the northern boundary of Texas to the British Possessions can either trade or travel be prosecuted from the western settlements to the Rocky Mountains, without imminent danger to life and property.

The danger to life and property is much greater to-day than it was twenty-five years ago. Robbery, savage brutality and murder, as well as the destruction of property, both public and private, are of almost daily occurrence. We infer that a policy which produces such results must be radically wrong. We believe that the policy of making treaties with the Indian tribes, and treating them as independent powers or nations, should be abandoned, because the Indians *will not* and the Government *cannot*, respect them and fulfill their stipulations. The Indians of the Plains are proverbially faithless; but if they were disposed to keep their treaty stipulations, there are many reckless white men on the frontier who do not hesitate to impose on them, and violate treaties that may be made with them. The result of this mutual bad faith is hostility and war.

No more Peace Commissioners should be allowed to precede the military forces of the Government, for the Indians, when hard pressed, are always ready for a "talk" and to receive presents; and, as soon as the Government troops leave their country, they again commence depredations.

We submit further for your consideration that when a military commander is sent against the Indians, his only order should be to chastise them until they sue for peace.

At so great a distance from Washington City it is impossible for the Department to know and understand the necessities of the service as well as the commander on the ground. He should have discretionary powers, so that he may plan a campaign and be able to carry it out without interference, which, from want of proper information, may result in immense losses to the Government.

We suggest that another change should be made in our Indian policy. The peaceable Indians and those at war, now occupy the same country. They occupy neutral ground, and have favor to

ask of both parties, and the result is nothing but evil. The friendly Indians are furnished by Government agents and white traders with firearms, powder, shot and lead, and they sell them to the hostile Indians.

They ought to be separated, and we suggest that a line of forts should be established on the upper Missouri River, and every friendly Indian in the country should be removed there and protected, fed and set to work, until they become self-sustaining communities. Those in hostility to Government should be made to understand that they can have peace and protection by reporting themselves at those forts, and when collected there they should be kept under the guns of the forts, and fed. We believe that it can be mathematically demonstrated that it will cost the Government much less to feed them than it will to kill them.

Those who do not voluntarily report themselves should be driven there by some energetic military leader, and that would be the end of the war.

We cannot refrain from expressing our opinion that the Indian Bureau should be abolished, and the Indians, instead of being treated as independent nations should be treated as wards of the Government, and placed under the control of the Secretary of War. These views we feel constrained to present for your consideration. We are here on the border—we see the results of the present policy. Almost daily we are called upon to contemplate the losses of public and private property, and mourn the death of friends and relatives. We are assured that people at the East have no adequate idea of the situation and wants of this Western region, and we earnestly hope that you may give this communication that consideration which we feel that it merits.

*Resolved*, That we feel that the reports published in the dispatches of the 12th of June, 1867, in regard to the Indian War, purporting to come from Gen. Buford and others, special commissioners, &c., do great injustice to our frontier settlers, and attribute motives to them which we know are not entertained by them as a class, as we can prove to members of Congress and the Chief Executive of the nation provided they will spend a few months in traveling on our frontier.

That the contractors, &c., referred to in said dispatches are not our frontier settlers, but a class of men from the East, who are here only by reason of their contracts, and if the Indians were wronged by them, which we do not believe to be true to any considerable extent, such wrongs are perpetrated by said contractors, &c., and not by our much abused frontier population.

*Resolved*, That our Senators in Congress be instructed, and our Representatives be requested to use their influence to secure the objects set forth in this memorial.

*Resolved*, That the Secretary of State be, and he is hereby instructed to furnish each of our Senators and our Representatives in Congress, with a certified copy of this memorial and joint resolution.

*Resolved*, That the Secretary of State be, and he is hereby instructed to transmit a certified copy of this memorial and joint resolution to the President of the United States.

Approved, June 20, 1867.